

The 14th Amendment—150 Years Later

“What Does Equal Protection Mean to Students?”

Essay and Video Contests for High School Students
Sponsored by the Federal Judges Association
and the Federal Bar Association



The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1868, and we will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2018. Students should discuss the equal protection clause and its importance in their lives. Students should also demonstrate an understanding of the cases and laws and the nature of the constitutional right to an equal education.

First place essay and video contest winners will receive a \$1,000 prize, second place essay and video contest winners will receive a \$500 prize, and three third place essay and video contest winners will receive a \$100 prize.

Contest rules and entry information follows at www.fedbar.org/Civics18.



Federal Bar Association

The 14th Amendment—150 Years Later

Ratified on July 9, 1868, the 14th Amendment to the Constitution provides, in part, that no state can “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Over the past 150 years, Congress and the courts have applied this “**Equal Protection Clause**” to our right to equal educational opportunities. Noteworthy court decisions include:

- ***Mendez v. Westminster School District***, decided in 1947, in which the placement of Mexican-American students into separate “Mexican schools” was found to violate their rights under the Equal Protection Clause;
- ***Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka***, decided in 1954, in which the placement of white and African-American students in different public schools on the basis of race was also found to violate the Equal Protection Clause;
- ***Lau v. Nichols***, decided in 1974, in which the lack of supplemental language instruction in public school for students with limited English proficiency was found to have violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- ***Regents of the University of California v. Bakke***, decided in 1978, and ***Grutter v. Bollinger*** and ***Gratz v. Bollinger***, decided in 2003, in which certain affirmative action policies used by two universities to increase minority enrollment were upheld while others were struck down; and
- ***Andrew F. v. Douglas County School District***, decided in 2017, in which public schools were required, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, to provide disabled students with opportunities to make meaningful, “appropriately ambitious” progress, such as grade-level advancement.

Congress applied the **Equal Protection Clause** to education by enacting laws governing state school programs or activities:

- **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which prohibits exclusion of a student based solely on race, color or national origin;
- **Title IX of the Civil Rights Act**, enacted in 1972, which prohibits exclusion of a student solely on the basis of sex;
- **The Rehabilitation Act of 1973**, which prohibits exclusion of a student based solely on the basis of a disability; and
- **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990**, which provides protections and educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

The prompt for the 2018 FJA and FBA Essay and Video Contests is “What does equal protection mean to students?”

Students should consider how the Equal Protection Clause applies in high schools, colleges and graduate schools, whether in admissions, classrooms or on athletic fields. Individual students can express their thoughts and ideas in an essay. Individuals and teams of up to three students can produce a 3-5 minute video on the theme. A student may submit both an essay and video. A student may submit only one essay and be involved in the production of only one video.

The essay or video should:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical background of the Equal Protection Clause;
2. Explain the constitutional powers and rights relevant to the court cases and laws mentioned above; and
3. Discuss the important role of the Judicial Branch in preserving the rights of Americans to equal education.

See official rules at www.fedbar.org/Civics18.

Contact fba@fedbar.org with questions or for more information.

FJA and FBA Civics Essay and Video Contests—2018 Rules

Who May Enter: Each contest is open to high school students in the United States and its Territories. Students in the 9th through 12th grades in public, private, parochial, and charter schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status are invited to participate. Note: Children of federal judges, chambers staff, and employees of clerk's offices may not participate.

Entry Deadline: Entries accepted beginning December 1, 2017. Entries must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on February 28, 2018. Finalists will be selected in March, and the winners announced by March 30.

Disqualification: Providing false information, not meeting the submission deadline, or not providing a release form if requested may result in disqualification.

Prizes: First place winners of both the essay and the video contest will receive a \$1,000 prize; second place winners of each contest will receive a \$500 prize; and third place winners of each contest will receive a \$100 prize.

Copyright: Adherence to copyright laws and fair use practices will be required. Please consult the resources page on www.fedbar.org/Civics18 for more information about how to legally make use of imagery, music and other materials created by others.

How to Enter: Entry information will be available at www.fedbar.org/Civics18.

Essay Rules

Length and Format: Essays should be between 500 and 1,000 words. While not required, proper use of footnotes and bibliographies will be credited during judging. Footnotes and bibliographies will not be included in the word count. Essays must be submitted electronically to this website—<http://www.fedbar.org>—as Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat documents. When entering the contest, you will be provided instructions for uploading your document.

Judging: Judging will be based on the following criteria:

- Understanding of constitutional principles: 40 points
- Clarity and effectiveness in expressing the theme: 30 points
- Grammar, spelling and composition: 25 points
- Use of footnotes, bibliographies: 5 points

Release Forms: Should you become a finalist in the contest, you will be required to submit a release form allowing the Federal Judges Association and the Federal Bar Association to publish your essay in print publications and on court public websites. In addition, contest winners will be required to provide and authorize use of photographs of themselves in contest-related promotional materials.

Video Rules

Length and Format: The video should be from 3 to 5 minutes long (not including end credits). Submit as MOV, MPEG4, MPEG2, MPEG, AVI or WMV files. Resolutions of 720x486 pixels to 1920x1080 pixels are acceptable. Files may not exceed 1GB in size. Videos should be compressed using the H.264 codec. When entering the contest, you will be provided with instructions for uploading your video file.

Judging: Judging will be based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrates an understanding of the theme and constitutional principles: 30 points
- Exhibits originality and creativity: 25 points
- Clearly and effectively engages the viewer on emotional/subjective level: 25 points
- Displays good production values (audio/video quality, editing, etc.): 10 points
- Respects copyright rules, properly credits content sources: 10 points

Release Forms: Finalists will be required to submit a release form allowing the Federal Judges Association and the Federal Bar Association to display your video. Releases also may be required of individuals appearing in your video. Contest winners also must provide and authorize use of photos of themselves in contest-related promotional materials.

Contact fa@fedbar.org with questions or for more information.